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Library move taken off the shelf

Grants could pay 40 percent of cost, make project more appealing

By Rob Keane
MPG Newspapers

DUXBURY — Town meeting experience and a possible state grant could help library trustees do what they couldn't do in past years — move the library to the Upper Alden School.

The Massachusetts Library Construction Program, a state aid program distributing \$45 million to local libraries, could give the Duxbury project over \$2½ million, 40 percent of the \$6.7 million project, provided it is approved at the 1995 annual town meeting.

Duxbury is in a good position to compete for the grant funding, according to Patience Jackson, building consultant of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

According to some library trustees, the grant could be the town's best opportunity to get a new library.

"The timing for this is excellent," said Jane Bradley, chairman of the library trustees. "I'd hate to see us lose this opportunity."

The grant, if approved, would be dispersed in two rounds, beginning in March 1995, approximately the same time of next year's town meeting.

Bradley sees the grant as a "no-risk" opportunity for the town.

"We can't get the grant without appropriation from town meeting," she said. "But if we approve the project, and it turns out we don't get the money,



Staff photo/Rob Keane

Into the new? — Library trustees are again pushing to move the library into the Upper Alden School.

then we don't have to do it."

For years, library officials have lamented over the shortcomings of the current 12,000-square-foot building, last expanded in 1968. Complaints include a children's room that is three times too small, a lack of shelving space, inadequate parking, and a whole building that's inaccessible to handicapped people.

According to Bradley, the town will spend money on the library one way or another. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires all public buildings must be handicapped accessible by January 1995. Not only is there no accessible entrance to the library, but there's no elevator, and the only public bathrooms are down a flight of stairs leading to the basement.

Bradley said the cost of putting an elevator in the building would be between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Plans to move into the unused Upper Alden building,

formerly the high school, were voted down in the 1993 annual town meeting. Although the project won a majority vote, the trustees didn't get the ¾ vote necessary to borrow money for the project.

The trustees opted not to pursue town approval at the 1994 town meeting, and instead concentrated on pursuing grants to bring the cost of the project down and make it more appealing. Trustees already have a guarantee for a \$200,000 grant, pending approval of the project.

"I don't want to sound cocky, but I think since we got the \$200,000, it makes our chances to get the (40 percent grant) look good," Bradley said.

Bradley said the trustees are lobbying to get other private and public donations to lower the overall cost of the project to the town, but she won't know how low she can estimate the project cost until March.

Although not endorsing the

idea, selectmen chairman Margaret Kearney said the possibility of a large grant could sweeten the pot for taxpayers.

"It will certainly make a difference with the voters," she said. "I would have to applaud the (trustees) if they get the grant."

Selectman Friend Weiler was cautious, but lauded the trustees' effort.

"It would be incredible if they could get that much money," he said. "But we have to think, what do we want to sacrifice in order to pay for the project? Even with the grant, it will still cost the town over \$4 million. What do we do? Do we give up other services, or do we raise taxes again? If they can get that kind of money, though, we should give it serious thought."

John Hill, the only trustee opposed to the plan, questions moving into a building several times larger than the current library.

"I still have a problem with it, to be honest," he said. "I don't understand having a library that size. I think they can stay where they are."

Hill suggested expanding the current library, but Bradley said expansion isn't feasible.

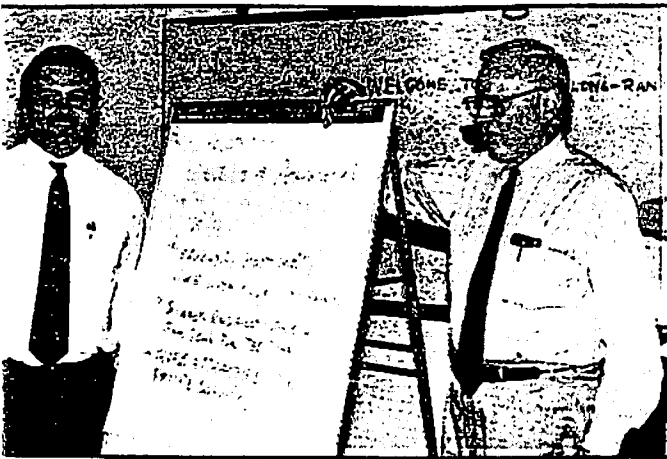
"People from the (state) have already told us they won't fund expansion for the library," she said. "It would impact an already bad traffic situation, and we would lose some playing fields belonging to the elementary school."

If the project gets approved, Bradley said, the new library should open in the fall of 1996.

"Since it involves an existing building, we can have construction on it done through the winter," she said.

Please turn to page A-7

ak out on planning



Staff photo/Rob Keane

g a list — Irv True and William Widing Jr. collect on about long-range planning from residents of Precinct a meeting last Wednesday night.

y down that road." of Hass's neighbors claiming that while ns supply people with running and biking xbury has no such ser- top priority for the was the condition of front.

man complained about in the bay, claiming n't see your feet if you he water. She also said gerous sharing the ith the multitude of ers that come to town. Loring of Josselyn essed the importance ing the beach. n danger of Washing- becoming beachfront he said.

oman said Duxbury althoigh better than l to be, need to be She said many sum- ents have two homes n send their children

to schools in Wellesley or Dover.

Residents also said zoning was an important consideration. Loring proposed varied zoning to help with taxes, but Cheri Hass pointed out that such zoning could threaten the rural character of the town.

"We have to look at zoning," she said. "If we decrease the (lot size), you increase the population."

The cummulative results of the six scheduled precinct meetings will be a survey mailed to all homeowners. Town officials hope to develop a long-range plan based on the survey and to implement it at the 1995 town meeting.

True said although he hoped to have roughly 30 participants at the meeting, he was pleased with the overall result.

"I'm pretty comfortable with the (format)," he said. "I wish we had more people, but the more we do this, the better we'll get at it."

nse, then hits pole

bury. "I pulled over and ran up. She got out, and she was fine."

Jehlicka appeared shaken as she stood on the sidewalk moments after the crash, talking to Gomer and Summer Street resident Vic Gobbell.

"I heard a crash and then a squeal (of tires)," said Gobbell, who lives across the street from the scene. He had come out to see what happened

Library move

Continued from page A3

Although next year's town meeting already promises to include some high-priced items on it's agenda, such as the North Hill Golf Course and a possible solution to Snug Har-

bor sewage problems, Bradley hopes there won't be a repeat of last year's town meeting vote.

"North Hill will pay for itself, but with other things, the town must decide its priorities," she said. "It's a big decision for the town, but this is our best shot."

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